United Nations A/64/684–S/2010/111

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
3 March 2010
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 15
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-fifth year

Identical letters dated 24 February 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I transmit to you herewith the position of Lebanon in preparation for the comprehensive assessment that will be presented by the Secretary-General in his forthcoming report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 15, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nawaf **Salam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

10-25781 (E) 040310 040310

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Annex to the identical letters dated 24 February 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Position of Lebanon in preparation for the comprehensive assessment that will be presented by the Secretary-General in his forthcoming report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

In preparation for the comprehensive periodic assessment that will be presented by the Secretary-General in his forthcoming report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), Lebanon would like to draw attention to the following:

1. Lebanon reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and calls on the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to fulfil its obligation to implement that resolution in full.

2. Since the last assessment, the Israeli enemy army has continued to violate Lebanese sovereignty in contravention of the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006). Those violations included the following:

(a) During the reporting period, the Israeli enemy army continued to violate Lebanese airspace, territory and territorial waters, committing 163 air violations, 22 sea violations and 26 land violations, in flagrant violation of Lebanese sovereignty and the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006), which calls for full respect for the Blue Line. Lebanon demands the immediate cessation of such violations and rejects any attempt to link them to Israeli allegations of arms smuggling. The nearly 6,500 air, sea and land violations of Lebanese sovereignty committed by Israel since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006) constitute a flagrant violation of the aforementioned resolution and all other relevant United Nations resolutions, the most important of which is resolution 425 (1978) of March 1978. In addition to being a flagrant breach of the line of Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory (the Blue Line), and a threat to international peace and security, those actions constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the purposes and principles of the Organization requiring nations to refrain from acting in a manner that threatens international peace and security. Lebanon calls on the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to cease its daily violations of Lebanese sovereignty and honour United Nations resolutions.

(b) During the reporting period, Israeli officials continued to threaten Lebanon following the formation of the Lebanese national unity Government. On more than one occasion they expressed their readiness to destroy Lebanon and impose collective punishment on the Lebanese people. This is in complete contravention of international law, and international humanitarian law in particular. Israel also attempted to undermine resolution 1701 (2006) by every means possible. On 7 December 2009, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that resolution 1701 (2006) had collapsed.

(c) Lebanon again reminds the international community that the Israeli enemy army violated Lebanese sovereignty when it planted an underground sensor

system in the area between the towns of Hula and Mays al-Jabal inside Lebanese territory. On 17 and 18 October 2009, after that sensor system had been discovered, the Israeli enemy army detonated it via remote control without regard for any loss of life that might have occurred. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Lebanese Army discovered a battery pack buried in the ground at the same location, which was apparently a third part of the system. The eleventh report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), paragraph 14, affirms that that incident constituted a violation of resolution 1701 (2006). The report also affirms that the presence of explosive devices placed on Lebanese territory by the Israeli enemy army constituted a violation of resolution 1701 (2006). It also indicates that, during those events on 17 and 18 October, Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles were observed flying over the incident area for a prolonged period of time. The report further indicates that overflights by unmanned aerial vehicles over the area of the incident not only constituted an air violation but also interfered with UNIFIL operational activities and freedom of movement.

(d) On Sunday, 31 January 2010, Israeli enemy forces penetrated deep into Lebanese territory and, at precisely 1340 hours, abducted the Lebanese citizen Rabi' Muhammad Zuhrah near Mazra'at Bastarah, on the outskirts of the Lebanese town of Kafr Shuba. They took him to one of their military posts in the occupied Shab'a Farms, where they interrogated, tortured and beat him severely, leaving him with scars and large wounds on his face and neck. Such actions are a flagrant violation of international laws in force and international humanitarian law. They released him on Monday, 1 February 2010, at 0200 hours. That abduction was a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and integrity of Lebanon and of resolution 1701 (2006), and a grave threat to international peace and security. Lebanon lodged an initial complaint with the Security Council about this incident, which it followed up with a second complaint.

(e) In 2009, Lebanese security forces uncovered a number of spying networks that were under the direct control of Israeli intelligence agencies. Lebanon considers those networks to be a flagrant violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Under the direct command of the Israeli intelligence agencies that created, trained and operated them, those networks assassinated a number of Lebanese citizens and monitored the movements of a number of others.

(f) Lebanon considers the continued Israeli occupation of the Shab'a Farms, the Lebanese Kafr Shuba hills and the Lebanese part of the town of Ghajar to constitute a threat to stability and security along the entire border, and a flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978. Lebanon demands that the international community bring pressure to bear on Israel to withdraw fully and unconditionally from Lebanese territory.

(g) Lebanon again reminds the international community that Israel has yet to hand over maps showing the locations of unexploded ordnance, including the cluster bombs it indiscriminately dropped on populated civilian areas. Those bombs have killed or injured over 357 persons, including 34 children and 70 youths. The Government of Lebanon has questioned the accuracy of the maps that Israel previously provided, inasmuch as 37 locations known to be contaminated by cluster bombs were not marked. Lebanon demands to know the dates on which Israel dropped cluster bombs, and the numbers and types of cluster bombs used. Moreover,

it recalls that the Lebanese Army has asked to be supplied with aerial photographs or video recordings of targeted sites, before and after the bombing. Israel bears criminal responsibility for the deaths of numerous Lebanese civilians killed by cluster bombs it dropped during its attack on Lebanon, for accidents caused by its unexploded ordnance, and for numerous other crimes committed against Lebanon and its citizens. It should therefore pay due compensation for those criminal acts. Lebanon urges the United Nations and donor countries to follow up this issue in order to protect the lives of innocent civilians.

(h) Lebanon also reminds the international community that Israel has not yet provided maps marking the location of the mines it laid during its 22-year occupation of Lebanese territory.

3. The Lebanese Army continues to strengthen strategic and tactical cooperation with UNIFIL.

(a) Joint patrols, checkpoints, training exercises and drills are specific examples of the ongoing coordination between the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL.

(b) Lebanon stresses that not one of the Secretary-General's reports on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) has referred to any evidence of arms smuggling into the UNIFIL area of operations. Moreover, all the weapons that have been found are remnants of Israel's war against Lebanon in the summer of 2006.

(c) Israel's allegations about arms stockpiling and the establishment of military installations in populated civilian areas in southern Lebanon are baseless. Their purpose is to facilitate and justify the targeting, killing and terrorization by Israel of innocent Lebanese civilians, albeit the targeting of civilians is prohibited and criminalized by relevant international instruments and international humanitarian law.

(d) Investigations conducted by UNIFIL following the incident at a garage in the town of Tayr Falsay on 12 October 2009 confirmed that there were no weapons at the site: the fire that broke out there had not been caused by an explosion but by an electrical spark that had ignited a leaking gas container. This finding was underlined in the eleventh report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), which states that UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army found no signs of arms or ammunition at the site.

(e) Lebanon affirms that the investigations conducted by the Lebanese Army in cooperation with UNIFIL indicate that the explosives discovered at Mazra'at Sardah, near the town of Khiyam, were buried in an orchard well away from any civilian areas.

Lebanon affirms that UNIFIL, in coordination with the Lebanese Army, initiated an investigation to determine the precise nature of the explosives and the circumstances under which they were discovered. That investigation is ongoing. In a statement made on Friday, 8 January 2010, Mr. Martin Nesirky, the official spokesperson of the Secretary-General, said that UNIFIL, in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, had launched an investigation into the precise nature of the explosives and the circumstances in which they had been found in that location, and that investigation was continuing.

Although the investigation is still at an early stage, and the nature and source of the explosives have yet to be determined, Israeli officials pre-empted the findings of the joint investigation and quickly took political advantage of the incident by spreading a series of lies alleging that a Lebanese party or regional parties were responsible for planting the explosives in Mazra'at Sardah.

(f) Lebanon will continue full coordination with UNIFIL because it believes that such coordination is the best means of resolving tensions along the Blue Line and addressing outstanding issues relating to resolution 1701 (2006). Continued unilateral action by Israel undermines the agreement with UNIFIL to maintain calm in its area of operations.

(g) With regard to setting up markers along the Blue Line, Lebanon reaffirms its commitment to the agreement to move ahead with and accelerate that operation.

4. Lebanon stresses the importance of increasing international assistance aimed at building the capacity of the Lebanese Army and security forces to defend Lebanese sovereignty and protect the Lebanese people. The Lebanese Army needs additional supplies of arms and ammunition, access to modern surveillance and communications equipment, and training in the use of such equipment.

5. With regard to border surveillance, in December 2008 the Lebanese Government decided to expand the responsibility of the Common Border Force, which had been restricted to monitoring the northern border, to include part of the eastern border. The ministerial border committee has commenced its work.

6. At the economic level, we would like to reiterate the call made in resolution 1701 (2006) for the international community to consider further assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon. In that connection, we call on the States that took part in the Stockholm Conference, the Paris III Conference and the Vienna Conference to fulfil their pledges. Lebanon greatly appreciates the economic and social programmes and humanitarian assistance, including emergency medical services and programmes, provided by UNIFIL to Lebanese citizens in its area of operations.

7. In order to strengthen stability and security, we must move from the current state of cessation of hostilities to a permanent ceasefire.